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Report of the twentieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (Vienna, 24-28 June 2013)

Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Rapporteur: Olivier de Frouville

Summary

In its resolution 2004/76 (para. 10 (a)) the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to organize periodic meetings among the special procedures.

The twentieth annual meeting of special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council was held in Vienna from 24 to 28 June 2013 in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which had firmly anchored the system of special procedures in the international human rights protection system.

The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, was elected as Chairperson of the meeting and the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures. The Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Olivier de Frouville, was elected Rapporteur and member of the Coordination Committee. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila Keetharuth; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana; and the Chairperson of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, Frances Raday, were endorsed as members of the Committee. Farida Shaheed, a former Chairperson, remains an ex officio member for the coming year.

Mandate holders exchanged views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Human Rights Council. Meetings with a number of stakeholders were held, including with representatives of European human rights

mechanisms, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions.

Discussions focused on coordination among mandate holders, including the role of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures and a number of issues relating to working methods. The importance of increasing resources for special procedures was stressed.

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I. Introduction

1. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, underlined the importance of preserving and strengthening the system of special procedures and specified that the procedures and mechanisms should be enabled to harmonize and rationalize their work through periodic meetings.¹ In recognition of the contribution of the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration to the special procedures system, the twentieth meeting of special rapporteurs, representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council was exceptionally held in Vienna from 24 to 28 June 2013.

2. Special procedures mandate holders thanked the Government of Austria for hosting their annual meeting in Vienna and expressed their appreciation for its recognition of the crucial role played by mandate holders in the implementation of the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights. They also thanked the Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for facilitating their participation in the Conference on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary.

3. During the annual meeting, mandate holders exchanged views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Human Rights Council. Meetings were held with representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), European human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A number of issues relating to working methods was discussed.

II. Organization of work

4. The Chairperson of the nineteenth annual meeting and of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, Michel Forst, opened the meeting. He referred to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and its importance for the special procedures system and welcomed the recently appointed mandate holders, who were participating for the first time.

5. The Chief of the Special Procedures Branch updated participants on recent developments in the United Nations human rights system and the work of OHCHR. Since the end of June 2012, three new country mandates had been created to address the situation in Belarus, Eritrea and, most recently, Mali. As a result, there were currently 49 mandates, including 6 five-member working groups, bringing the number of mandate holders to 73.²

6. In 2012, special procedures carried out 80 visits to 55 countries or territories, while the number of States issuing a standing invitation for visits rose to 94. Special procedures sent 603 communications to 127 States regarding concerns over specific individuals and situations. Seventy-five per cent of those were issued jointly. The response rate by States, however, remained disappointingly low at around 40 per cent.

¹ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), part II, para. 95.

² The mandate holder on the Syrian Arab Republic will take office when the Commission of Inquiry on that country has concluded its work.

7. It was stressed that joint action by mandate holders had been strengthened. For example, in February 2013, a panel on human rights mainstreaming and the role of special procedures had discussed how special procedures and other parts of the United Nations could work together to mainstream human rights across its work, whether in the context of development, peace and security or other areas. Mandate holders had continued to issue joint statements on issues of common interest, such as on the occasion of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law on 24 September 2012, and on International Women's Day, and they advocated mainstreaming of human rights in the post-2015 agenda.

8. Participants' attention was drawn to the OHCHR planning process for the next four-year cycle and mandate holders were called upon to provide their insights with a view to ensuring that OHCHR resources are spent where they are likely to have most impact. One of the major areas of focus and work of OHCHR is support and strengthening of human rights mechanisms. Examples of special procedures activities and results included in the 2012 OHCHR report were highlighted.

9. Participants elected the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, Chairperson of the meeting and of the Coordination Committee. The Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Olivier de Frouville, was elected Rapporteur and member of the Coordination Committee. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila Keetharuth; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana; and the Chairperson of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, Frances Raday, were endorsed as members of the Committee. Farida Shaheed, a former Chairperson, will remain an ex officio member for the following year.

10. The provisional agenda of the meeting was revised and adopted.

III. Activities of the Coordination Committee

11. The outgoing Chairperson of the Coordination Committee briefed participants on the activities of the Committee in 2012/2013, noting that it had focused on strengthening engagement with various stakeholders, including the President of the Human Rights Council, States and regional human rights systems. Emphasis had also been placed on identifying situations and cross-cutting issues of common concern to mandate holders.

12. Pursuant to the standing invitation to mandate holders to participate in special sessions of the Human Rights Council, which had resulted from a discussion between the President of the Council and the Chairperson of the Coordination Committee in November 2008, arrangements were made to facilitate contributions of special procedures to special sessions. On 29 May 2013, during its twenty-third session, the Human Rights Council held an urgent debate on the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic and the recent killings in Al-Qusayr. In that context, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions delivered a statement on behalf of the Coordinating Committee and were invited to share their views from the perspective of their respective mandates. This was the first time that special procedures had been seated on the podium and given the floor from there during an urgent debate of the Council.

13. It is the established practice of the Human Rights Council to invite mandate holders to participate in panels of relevance to their mandates and in accordance with the modalities defined for each of these panels. In addition, chairpersons of the Coordinating Committee have been invited to participate in panels from the floor. On 1 March 2013, the Chairperson

of the Coordinating Committee consolidated this practice by making a statement from the floor on behalf of all special procedures mandate holders at the high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming during the twenty-second session of the Council. He had also participated in a panel on human rights mainstreaming and the role of special procedures organized by the Special Procedures Branch in New York on 14 February 2013 and he suggested that those practices would expand the space available to mandate holders for providing their perspectives in intergovernmental forums.

14. The Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee discussed general questions relating to the special procedures system in meetings with stakeholders, including the President of the Human Rights Council and NGOs. He also raised the importance of encouraging qualified candidates to apply to become mandate holders in line with the appointment process established in 2011 as one outcome of the five-year review of the Council.

15. The Chairperson of the Coordination Committee referred to the fact that several mandate holders had raised reprisals-related issues during their interactive dialogues with the Human Rights Council, noting that it was crucial for individuals and groups to have unhindered access to human rights mechanisms. The Chairperson raised the issue with several stakeholders, including NGOs and the President of the Council, asking them to maintain a strong stance on reprisals. On 13 September 2012 during the twenty-first session of the Council, the Chairperson had participated in the panel on the issue of intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who cooperate or have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.

16. The Chairperson of the Coordination Committee reported that NGOs appreciated the opportunity to meet regularly with the Coordinating Committee of Special Procedures, but would not favour the establishment of a formal coordination mechanism, as suggested during the nineteenth annual meeting. The Chairperson had continued his engagement with NGOs through informal meetings, in particular in the lead-up to the twentieth annual meeting.

IV. Exchange of views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

17. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as a milestone for the international human rights community and the special procedures system, as it provided the context in which they could become a key pillar of the United Nations human rights promotion and protection framework. She recalled that the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna had acknowledged the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights including the right to development and that the three United Nations pillars of development, peace and security and human rights, were equally important. It had also been in Vienna that the crucial role of civil society, NHRIs and regional human rights arrangements had been recognized and women's rights had been put firmly on the international agenda for the first time.

18. The High Commissioner deplored the fact that in spite of the commitments made in Vienna, there were many human rights crises ongoing in many parts of the world, in particular in the Syrian Arab Republic, where political considerations appeared to have been prioritized over human rights and her calls for the situation to be referred to the International Criminal Court had gone unheeded. She indicated that the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons had been tasked to report in August to the General Assembly on the situation of IDPs in the Syrian Arab Republic. She called

upon mandate holders not to let the victims of violations down or allow the perpetrators to act with impunity.

19. She noted the challenges that special procedures and other international human rights mechanisms continued to face, including the patchy implementation of their recommendations. She recalled that the universal periodic review (UPR) could serve as a tool for periodic follow-up. She stressed the fact that special procedures were well placed to hold States to account in respect of their human rights obligations and recommendations accepted during the UPR. Real change at the national level required all parts of the United Nations to work together. She welcomed the use of the collective voice of the special procedures including their demands that concrete measures to reduce inequality be included in the post-2015 agenda.

20. She drew attention to reprisals against persons who had collaborated with United Nations human rights mechanisms and the need to tackle the factors which created legislative and regulative environments conducive to reprisals and suppression of civil society. She noted that the panel on reprisals convened at the twenty-second session of the Human Rights Council on 13 September 2012 had put forward several recommendations, including observation of trials of human rights defenders; the establishment of a central registry of reprisals to ensure proper follow-up; strengthening steps to assist victims; and the establishment of national witness protection programmes. The High Commissioner told mandate holders that she was aware of disparaging personal remarks and verbal attacks against mandate holders, in the Council and in other contexts. She assured participants of her full support for them, in particular their independence.

21. In terms of planning for the future, the High Commissioner reminded mandate holders that, as part of the new OHCHR four-year planning cycle, she had solicited views from special procedures, among others. The inputs received formed the basis of the thematic priorities currently being defined by OHCHR. Strengthening human rights mechanisms would remain prominent as a tool for achieving progress in substantive areas, and as a substantive area for the Office. She mentioned that resources had become more scarce, both in terms of regular and extrabudgetary funds, and that the Office was actively exploring new funding sources. She said that OHCHR had sponsored a meeting with information technology companies, which indicated their desire to assist OHCHR to make better use of new technologies in human rights work. Steps had also been taken to improve the user-friendliness of the website.

22. Mandate holders who took the floor thanked the High Commissioner for the support provided by her and her Office and drew attention to their shrinking resources. In this regard, they noted that mandate holders should receive financial and human resources support on an equitable and transparent basis and underlined the importance of continuity in staffing. They raised the possibility of their proactive participation in the UPR mechanism. Several expressed concern that negative traditional and cultural attitudes might affect the implementation of international human rights, while others inquired about her views on the proposal for a world court on human rights. They asked her to prioritize a revamp of the OHCHR website and to ensure that opportunities offered by new technologies were actively pursued to facilitate access by victims to human rights mechanisms, especially special procedures. They also called on her to take measures to enhance the visibility of special procedures and that of OHCHR.

V. Human Rights Council and the special procedures system

23. Participants exchanged views with the President of the Human Rights Council, Remigiusz Achilles Henczel, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations

Office at Geneva, the Director of the Human Rights Council Special Procedures Division and the Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch of OHCHR.

24. The President of the Human Rights Council expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the special procedures, pointing to the crucial role they play, calling them the “eyes and ears of the Council”. He welcomed the outgoing Chairperson of the Coordination Committee and congratulated the new Chairperson on his election, stating that he looked forward to their future cooperation. He welcomed the growing participation of mandate holders in the Council, including statements by two mandate holders in the urgent debate on the Syrian Arab Republic on 29 May 2013. He reassured special procedures mandate holders of his commitment to preserve and strengthen their participation in the work of the Council.

25. The President of the Human Rights Council provided an update on his recent trip to New York where he had highlighted the issue of the increasing number of mandates created by the Council without the matching necessary resources. The President stated that special procedures were essential to foster human rights mainstreaming within the United Nations system, including by cooperating with various United Nations entities. He highlighted the full independence and integrity of special procedures mandate holders and his strong stance in relation to derogatory remarks and personal attacks against them during Council sessions. He underlined his firm commitment to preserve the space available for civil society and to denounce publicly any acts of intimidation or reprisals against those who sought to cooperate with human rights mechanisms.

26. The Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch observed that the Council was continuing to create new mandates, testifying to their importance and States’ recognition of their crucial role. He referred to the Coordination Committee, whose role he considered to be currently recognized by the Council. The Secretariat provided advice to the President, when personal attacks against mandate holders by States and others occurred during meetings.

27. Participants thanked the President of the Human Rights Council for his support and recommended that the time available to mandate holders during the interactive dialogue be extended. It was also proposed that mandate holders be provided an opportunity to participate in general debates. Mandate holders further encouraged the Council to be more proactive in following up on country visit reports. The question was raised as to whether special procedures, especially country mandates, could provide input into the UPR process, as was its role in the follow-up to the UPR outcome. The role of special procedures as an early warning mechanism for the Council was discussed. Special procedures urged the President to continue to react promptly to personal attacks within and outside the Council and support their independence.

28. It was pointed out that the differing titles of special procedures mandates (special rapporteurs, independent experts and working groups) were considered confusing for stakeholders and consistency in nomenclature was needed.³ The important role of country offices in follow-up at the national level and in assisting country visits was also highlighted.

³ As contemplated in Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, annex, para. 59.

VI. Thematic issues and working methods

A. Effectiveness of special procedures

29. Mr. Ted Piccone, Senior Fellow and Deputy Director for Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, provided a briefing on his study entitled “The future of the United Nations special procedures”.⁴ A number of proposals aimed at ensuring that interventions by special procedures had maximum impact were put forward. For instance, it was suggested that the timing of country visits be determined in close coordination with other mechanisms, particularly the UPR. Similarly, identifying key partners at an early stage in the preparation of a country visit with a view to ensuring follow-up at the national level was considered a means of ensuring that a visit led to change on the ground. The role of the United Nations was regarded as critical, in particular at the national level, especially United Nations country teams (UNCTs). The study indicated that follow-up visits were effective in ensuring that recommendations were not overlooked. There was also a need for better follow-up to communications, with the States concerned and the sources.

30. Mandate holders asked whether there was increased impact when activities were joint; whether there were good practices of engaging with States and others in respect of follow-up to recommendations; how to address intimidation of those who provide information to mandate holders; whether there was a need to research the effectiveness of partnerships with regional mechanisms; and how to make the concept of a “standing invitation” more meaningful. Strong concern was expressed about ad hominem attacks against mandate holders, which constituted intimidation. Mandate holders reiterated their freedom to assess situations under their mandates and recalled the duty of States to cooperate with them.

31. Participants stressed that the credibility and integrity of the special procedures system were crucial in ensuring cooperation of the various stakeholders. They pointed to the impact that activities, such as focused expert meetings and regional consultations, have. Resources for special procedures were discussed, including the possibility of finding ways to influence budget discussions in New York. It was also suggested that positive examples of the impact of special procedures should be brought to the attention of member States and donors.

32. Discussions were also held on the conclusions of a workshop organized by Stanford University’s Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, with the Brookings Institution’s Foreign Policy Studies Program and Google.org, to advance strategic thinking on how to use new technologies to strengthen United Nations human rights monitoring, held on 6-7 August 2012 with the participation of a number of mandate holders.⁵

33. Recommendations included the need to use new technologies more effectively; make processing of cases taken up by special procedures as communications more victim-friendly; ensure better follow-up; increase outreach beyond those who traditionally work with special procedures and enhance the visibility of the system.

⁴ Forthcoming article based on Ted Piccone, *Catalysts for Change: How the UN’s Independent Experts Promote Human Rights* (Brookings Institution Press, 2012).

⁵ Report on the workshop on new technologies and human rights monitoring of 6-7 August 2012 available at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/AMeetings/20thsession/NewTechnologiesBriefing_item5.pdf.

B. Enhancing coordination with the special procedures system

34. Mandate holders welcomed and endorsed draft guidelines on a gender sensitive and family-friendly environment for the work of special procedure mandate holders, prepared by two mandate holders in close consultations with the Coordination Committee. Noting the challenges faced by mandate holders with infants or young children, the draft guidelines suggested that United Nations staff rules on breastfeeding be applied to mandate holders; that adequate access to United Nations premises be provided to mandate holders' infants and their caregivers; and that appropriate designated areas for breastfeeding be made available on United Nations premises. The draft guidelines urged consideration of additional budgetary provisions to cover the costs of caregivers when a mandate holder travelled with an infant and permission for mandate holders to travel with young children older than one, subject to security and other conditions. It was proposed that requests for such assistance be reviewed by the Coordinating Committee, which would make recommendations to the Secretariat. The meeting called on the Secretariat to support their implementation.

35. Mandate holders continued to discuss transparency of financial support provided to them from external sources to safeguard their independence, impartiality and integrity. They agreed to identify general trends and patterns of external support, which would provide a basis for responding to concerns related to external funding.

36. Other working method issues discussed were coordination of joint statements and of country visits and a harmonized approach to frequently raised questions on challenges confronting mandate holders and the possibility of the development of tools to ensure consistency among mandate holders in this context. The Secretariat's response to personal attacks against mandate holders was also discussed.

VII. The twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

37. On 27-28 June 2013 mandate holders taking part in the twentieth annual meeting participated in the International Expert Conference on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna+20 – Advancing the Protection of Human Rights: Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives 20 Years after the World Conference, organized by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, in cooperation with OHCHR, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights and the European Training and Research Centre for Democracy and Human Rights of the University of Graz, Austria.

38. Chaloka Beyani, Chairperson of the Coordination Committee, participated in an expert panel, "Vienna+20. The Way Forward", in which he highlighted the contribution of special procedures to better promote and protect human rights, and the contents of the "Statement of the United Nations special procedures mandate holders on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna", prepared by the twentieth meeting for the International Expert Conference (see annex I).

39. During the International Expert Conference mandate holders participated in three working groups, on (a) strengthening the rule of law: the right to an effective remedy for victims of human rights violations; (b) realizing human rights of women universally;

tackling the implementation gap; and (c) mainstreaming human rights: a human rights-based approach for the post-2015 development agenda.⁶

VIII. Consultations with stakeholders

A. Regional human rights mechanisms

40. Mandate holders interacted with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

41. The Deputy Director of ODIHR provided an overview of the geographic scope of OSCE which goes beyond Europe with Central Asia and North America fully participating and some States from Asia and the Mediterranean region acting as observers. He also pointed to the three dimensions of OSCE: security, environment and human rights. Noting that it was a consensus-based organization founded on political commitments rather than on legally binding obligations, he stressed that the ODIHR mandate was consistent with that of special procedures in many areas, including freedom of assembly, human rights defenders, trafficking, religion, education, racism and independence of judges and lawyers. The work of ODIHR in elections in transition countries was of particular relevance. Together with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law), ODIHR often reviewed legislation in order to encourage legal frameworks to be brought into line with international standards. The importance of enhancing information-sharing was emphasized, while it was also noted that ODIHR was ready to broaden cooperation with special procedures, including through joint recommendations, joint visits and joint publications.

42. The Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe noted that the Council was a standard-setting organization with 47 member States. A key body was the European Court of Human Rights, which issued legally binding judgements. The Council collaborated with United Nations treaty bodies and submitted information to the UPR. He encouraged closer coordination with special procedures in relation to country visits and exchange of information generally.

43. The Head of Communications of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights described the Agency's mandate as follows: provide assistance on fundamental rights issues to European institutions and member States and to gather and disseminate objective information and data on fundamental rights in the European Union. Specific areas of work were access to justice, assistance to victims of crimes, Roma integration, migrants' rights and asylum, rights of the child and racism. He also referred to instances of past cooperation with United Nations special procedures, in particular on the right to housing and migrants' rights.

44. Several mandate holders drew attention to the impact of austerity measures in European countries, which were sometimes in contradiction with international and European human rights norms. They also noted that the economic crisis was associated with the revival of racism. Some commented on the fact that bilateral and free trade agreements were largely driven by corporations, while civil society had little input. Migration was an important issue in Europe and both the Council of Europe and OSCE had important roles to play. A framework for monitoring and accountability was needed. One mandate holder stressed the fact that Europe had experience in addressing transitional

⁶ See http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/OHCHR20/Vienna20_conf_report.pdf.

justice issues, including in terms of how history was taught, which could provide useful practice for other parts of the world. The work of European mechanisms on gender issues was welcomed. Suggestions were made about cooperation with regional organizations in Africa, the Americas and Asia. The question of reprisals against human rights defenders who cooperated with the United Nations and European human rights institutions was also raised.

45. Furthermore mandate holders discussed the status of the implementation of the road map agreed at the dialogue between the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on 17-18 January 2012 in Addis Ababa. The Chairperson of the joint working group to advance and monitor the implementation of the Addis Ababa road map briefed the meeting on some of the activities carried out since the nineteenth annual meeting in June 2012. He highlighted the participation of a number of mandate holders in the ordinary sessions of ACHPR. The Chairperson drew attention to the fact that a number of special procedures of the African Commission had participated in events convened by United Nations special procedures mandate holders. There had been regular exchanges of information, such as notes forecasting the relevant activities of both systems; press releases and reports issued by both mechanisms; and information on vacant special procedures mandates.

46. During the discussion, mandate holders highlighted the added value of their interactions and cooperation with the African human rights mechanisms, particularly the special procedures mechanisms. Some mandate holders found it useful to engage with government delegations at the regional level on themes or countries falling within their mandates; others valued networking with civil society, particularly those active at the regional and national level; some mandate holders appreciated the possibility of discussing with African special procedures mechanisms issues that had not previously been extensively examined by those mechanisms. It was suggested that United Nations special procedures mandate holders could consider strengthening partnerships with all the African human rights mechanisms, including the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as cooperating with subregional level mechanisms in the African continent. Mandate holders encouraged partnerships with other regional systems to be pursued gradually on the basis of a framework similar to that of the Addis Ababa road map. Interest in exploring further avenues for strengthening collaboration with the African special procedures mechanisms was expressed by a number of mandate holders in relation to the issues falling within their mandates.

B. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

47. A delegation from UNODC outlined its mandate. It was also emphasized that the inclusion of a human rights dimension was a priority in combating organized crime.

48. UNODC supported the development of standards and norms relating to crime prevention and their implementation, by facilitating police reform, reform of prosecution services, the judiciary, improving treatment of victims, providing access to legal aid and juvenile justice and combating violence against women. UNODC expressed the desire to cooperate more closely with special procedures in areas relating to its mandate, which was being expanded by the Crime Commission that has called on it to develop further normative frameworks in relation to violence against children and the minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. UNODC had collaborated with several rapporteurs.

49. Mandate holders posed questions on the work of UNODC with respect to replacing punishment of persons using drugs with treatment, as well as the use of the death penalty for drug-related crimes. Participants also raised the issue of specialized courts for organized

crime, including human trafficking, and underscored the importance of raising awareness and training judicial personnel and other stakeholders.

C. Civil society and non-governmental organizations

50. Representatives of civil society organizations appreciated the work of mandate holders and the opportunity to address the annual meeting. A group of 10 civil society organizations, the International Service for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Alkarama, Forum-Asia, the Association for the Prevention of Torture, the Baha'i International Community, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, the World Organization against Torture, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and Human Rights Watch, presented a joint contribution to the meeting. They stressed the importance of following up the work of mandate holders, including the follow-up to communications and recommendations issued after country visits. Representatives of civil society organizations also expressed appreciation for efforts to improve coordination including through the Coordination Committee which is largely seen as having a positive role in ensuring links with the Human Rights Council and conveying a strong collective voice of the special procedures system as a whole. They suggested that the Coordination Committee should have a role in the selection and appointment of new mandate holders, e.g. outgoing mandate holders could prepare job descriptions based on their experience of the mandate. They also highlighted the importance of special procedures, clearly articulating what was expected in terms of cooperation by States and developing cooperation indicators. They discussed the dilemma between mainstreaming different issues throughout the work of several mandates versus focusing on specific themes. Ideas that emerged in this regard included the holding of thematic discussions at future annual meetings.

51. NGO representatives expressed gratitude for the commitment of mandate holders in taking up cases of reprisals. It was suggested that the Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures be revised to include a section on reprisals.

52. Mandate holders expressed their appreciation for the work of civil society organizations, underlining that they were central partners in their activities. They asked for the views of NGOs on emerging human rights issues, highlighted the need to have integrated follow up strategies, at national and international level, including civil society. They underlined the role of international civil society organizations in developing the capacity of local organizations to disseminate and monitor the implementation of special procedures recommendations. Mandate holders also referred to the use of new information technology in monitoring and reporting on human rights violations. They recommended that the space for civil society organizations to participate in United Nations bodies, in particular the Human Rights Council, be strengthened and protected and that their contributions be promoted.

D. National human rights institutions

53. The mandate holders engaged in a dialogue with the Secretary of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of Mauritius, and a member of the National Human Rights Council of Morocco. They pointed out that NHRIs constituted a bridge between the State and NGOs, and between the international human rights and national protection systems. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation with special procedures including before, during and after country visits and sharing information on human rights situations.

54. The International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Institutions encouraged NHRIs to send information to special procedures mechanisms, inform them when they were under threat and increase participation of mandate holders in conferences and events convened by national institutions or the Coordination Committee. The International Coordination Committee intended to develop a compilation of good practices of collaboration with special procedures. NHRIs regularly encouraged States to issue standing invitations to special procedures. It was suggested that the Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures be improved by adding guidance on working with NHRIs, and that future induction sessions for new mandate holders include information on interaction with such institutions. NHRIs and special procedures mechanisms could have greater impact through mutual reinforcement particularly if there was timely coordination.

55. Mandate holders suggested that NHRIs could disseminate their recommendations on special procedures mechanisms, including through their annual reports. Mandate holders also noted that special procedures could be consulted in the process of accreditation of national institutions. It was recalled that NHRIs had an important role in monitoring human rights violations.

Annex I

Statement of the United Nations special procedures mandate holders on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993

Vienna, 26 June 2013

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) on 25 June 1993, the special procedures mandate holders,

Welcome the opportunity to celebrate the achievements in implementing human rights since 1993, and to identify and address the remaining gaps and new challenges in advancing the protection of human rights;

Recall that the VDPA:

- Makes clear that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis
- Recognizes that it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms
- States that the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms must be considered a priority objective of the United Nations, and that the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community
- Stresses that women's rights are human rights and calls for the elimination of violence against women

Also recall that the VDPA is a landmark which provides the framework for the consolidation of a strong and effective system of special procedures as a central part of the United Nations human rights mechanisms and that it:

- Underlines the importance of preserving and strengthening the system of special procedures to enable them to carry out their mandates in all countries of the world, and providing them with the necessary human and financial resources
- Stresses that the special procedures should be able to harmonize and rationalize their work through periodic meetings
- Asks States to cooperate fully with special procedures

Welcome the progress in the achievement of the goals in the VDPA;

Recognize, however, that some of these goals have not yet been achieved and new challenges for the promotion and protection of human rights have emerged which include among others:

- Undermining of the universality of human rights, including through the resurgence of advocacy for traditional values or cultural relativism
- Financial crisis and the consequences of austerity measures
- Adverse impact of climate change

- Impact of privatization on human rights
- Impact of the increasing use of intellectual property rights in free trade agreements on human rights
- Impact on human rights of non-governmental entities, such as business enterprises or private military and security companies
- Threats on privacy, including through new information communication technologies and architecture
- Extreme and growing poverty
- Prevalence and emergence of conflicts
- Consequences of counter-terrorism measures on respect for human rights
- Racism, inequality, and all forms of discrimination
- Interferences in the administration of justice
- Limitation of public and democratic space as well as threats, attacks and intimidation of civil society by both States and non-State entities
- Issues related to the increasing mobility of populations, including non-recognition of migrants as rights holders

Stress that special procedures mandate holders confront challenges in discharging their mandates which include insufficient implementation and follow-up to their recommendations, lack of cooperation of States as well as intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with them, and paucity of resources;

Emphasize that these challenges require focused analysis and innovative policy responses;

Reaffirm the continued relevance of the VDPA and its forward-looking agenda for human rights, including important commitments and principles that should not be reopened. The twentieth anniversary must serve as a platform for moving forward to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by all without discrimination;

Recommend that States:

- Step up their efforts to make human rights a universal reality for all human beings on a basis of equality and without discrimination
- Ensure, in the light of the fact that human rights are one of the three pillars of the United Nations, that human rights mainstreaming is a priority and that the human rights sector receives commensurate support and resources
- Fully integrate human rights into the post-2015 development agenda, guaranteeing that human rights principles, especially equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability, are consistently taken into account in all development measures
- Cooperate fully with special procedures, in particular by accepting requests for visits, responding in a timely manner to communications, engaging in a constructive dialogue including on all issues and implementing recommendations
- Refrain from any act of intimidation and reprisal against those who cooperate with the United Nations in the field of human rights, exercise due diligence to prevent non-State entities from such acts, and ensure adequate protection for those that are subject to such acts

- Enshrine human rights protection in legislation and ensure that the protection of the law applies equally, and that all people without discrimination have access to justice and remedy
- Reject any attempt to question the universality of human rights through advocacy of traditional values or cultural relativism
- Recognize the role of civil society, including human rights defenders, and national human rights institutions as key players for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, including by creating a safe and enabling environment in which human rights defenders can operate free from hindrance and insecurity

Call on the United Nations system as a whole to rely more on the expertise of the special procedures and on their early warning capacity;

Reiterate the VDPA recommendation for cooperation among human rights bodies in the United Nations system, including by encouraging the special procedures, human rights treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism to work together and strengthen their activities towards more effective protection and promotion of human rights.

Annex II

Special procedures mandate holders invited to attend the twentieth annual meeting

I. Thematic mandates

1.	Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context	Rachel Rolnik (Brazil)*
2.	Chairperson of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent	Verene Shepherd (Jamaica)
3.	Chairperson of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention	Malick El Hadji Sow (Senegal)
4.	Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Najat Maalla M'jid (Morocco)
5.	Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights	Farida Shaheed (Pakistan)
6.	Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	Alfred de Zayas (United States of America)
7.	Special Rapporteur on the right to education	Kishore Singh (India)
8.	Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	Olivier de Frouville (France)
9.	Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions	Christof Heyns (South Africa)
10.	Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights	Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona (Chile)*
11.	Special Rapporteur on the right to food	Olivier De Schutter (Belgium)*
12.	Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	Cephas Lumina (Zambia)
13.	Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association	Maina Kiai (Kenya)*
14.	Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression	Frank William La Rue Lewy (Guatemala)*
15.	Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief	Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany)*
16.	Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment	John H. Knox (United States of America)

* Did not attend.

17.	Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health	Anand Grover (India)
18.	Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders	Margaret Sekaggya (Uganda)
19.	Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers	Gabriela Knaul (Brazil)
20.	Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples	James Anaya (United States of America)
21.	Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons	Chaloka Beyani (Zambia)
22.	Chairperson of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	Anton Farrel Katz (South Africa)
23.	Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants	François Crépeau (Canada)
24.	Independent Expert on minority issues	Rita Izsák (Hungary)
25.	Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence	Pablo de Greiff (Colombia)*
26.	Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	Mutuma Ruteere (Kenya)*
27.	Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences	Gulnara Shahinian (Armenia)
28.	Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	Virginia Dandan (Philippines)
29.	Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism	Ben Emmerson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)*
30.	Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	Juan Mendez (Argentina)*
31.	Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights	Marc Pallemarts (Belgium)*
32.	Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children	Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (Nigeria)
33.	Member of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises	Puvan Selvanathan (Malaysia)
34.	Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation	Catarina de Albuquerque (Portugal)*

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| 35. | Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice | Frances Raday
(Israel/ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) |
| 36. | Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences | Rashida Manjoo
(South Africa)* |

II. Country mandates

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| 37. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus | Miklós Haraszti (Hungary) |
| 38. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia | Surya Prasad Subedi (Nepal) |
| 39. | Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire | Doudou Diène (Senegal) |
| 40. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea | Marzuki Darusman
(Indonesia)* |
| 41. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea | Sheila B. Keetharuth
(Mauritius) |
| 42. | Independent Expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Haiti | Michel Forst (France) |
| 43. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran | Ahmed Shaheed (Maldives) |
| 44. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar | Tomás Ojea Quintana
(Argentina) |
| 45. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 | Richard Falk
(United States of America)* |
| 46. | Independent Expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Somalia | Shamsul Bari (Bangladesh) |
| 47. | Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan | Mashood Baderin (Nigeria) |
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